



Leadership and Resiliency Program

The Leadership and Resiliency Program (LRP) is a school- and community-based program for high school students (14 to 19 years of age) that works to enhance youths' internal strengths and resiliency, while preventing involvement in substance use and violence. Program components include:

- **Resiliency Groups** held at least weekly during the school day
- **Alternative Adventure Activities** that include ropes courses, white water kayaking, camping, and hiking trips
- **Community Service** in which participants are active in a number of community- and school-focused projects

These alternative activities, offered after school, on weekends, and during the summer, focus on community service, altruism, learning about managed risk, social skills improvement, and conflict resolution.

BENEFITS

The program is designed to:

- Increase students' perceptions of competence and self-worth
- Improve participant identification with positive roles
- Reduce disciplinary actions in school
- Improve participants' communication and refusal skills
- Increase knowledge of and negative attitudes about substance abuse and violence

HERE'S PROOF PREVENTION WORKS



Proven Results

- Significant reduction in school absences over previous years
- Grade point averages increased 0.8 (on a 4.0 point scale)
- Increased sense of school bonding
- Extremely high percentage of participants either become employed or pursue post-secondary education; 100% graduated

INTERVENTION

Universal

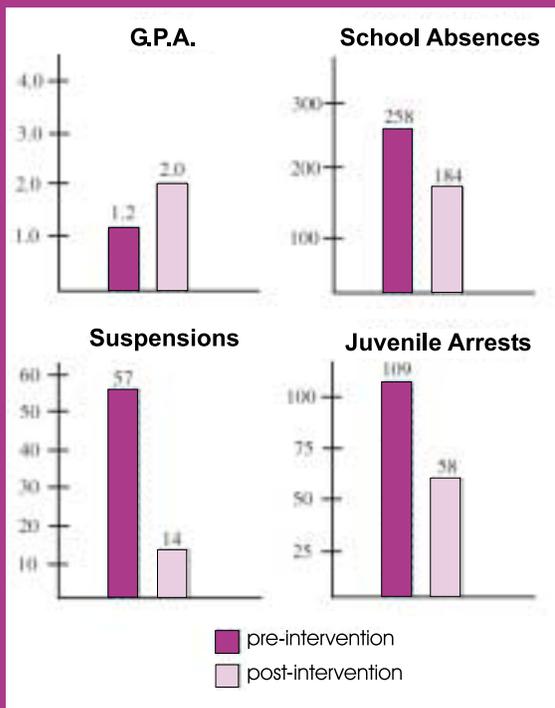
Selective

Indicated

OUTCOMES

Program participants realized:

- An increase of 0.8 in GPA (based on a 4.0 scale)
- A 60% to 70% increase in school attendance
- A 65% to 70% reduction in school behavioral incidents
- 100% graduation rates



- Increase community involvement in promoting the healthy development of youth and the valuing of adolescents

TARGET POPULATION

LRP is a year-round, comprehensive program aimed at youth ages 14 to 19, who have a combination of behavioral issues manifested in high absenteeism and high levels of disciplinary actions, low grades, substance use, and/or violence. School administrators and guidance staff, in cooperation with prevention staff from the collaborating community agency, identify participants; however, some students self-nominate. Students are interviewed to assess their risk and protective factors and the highest risk students are enrolled in the program. Study participants have been from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and the program is designed for both mainstream and alternative high school populations.

HOW IT WORKS

LRP requires a partnership between a high school and a substance abuse or health service agency. Schools work with agency personnel to identify program candidates and provide different types of support, as needed.

For best results, students should enter the program early in their high school career and participate until graduation. However, students may enter the program in any grade during high school. Participants attend weekly in-school resiliency groups lead by a facilitator (i.e., program leader) for the duration of the program. Additional individual or small group followup discussions between the facilitator and students may be held at other times during the week.

LRP students are expected to participate at least weekly in community service activities, which take place after school or on weekends.

Core activities include:

- **Animal Rehabilitation**—LRP youth volunteer at a local rescue shelter for abused and neglected animals
- **Community Beautification**—participants clean area streams and plant trees to improve the environment
- **Puppet Project**—participants learn skits on relevant issues, such as family substance abuse and social skills development, and present them to elementary school students

Participants are required to participate in animal rehabilitation activities at least once a month. Outdoor and adventure activities are also scheduled regularly, and each participant is expected to attend at least five of these trips over the several years they are involved in

the program. Longtime LRP students who exhibit increased maturity gain the opportunity to participate in the Puppet Project. Each group is expected to perform a puppet skit for elementary students at least once during their high school career (and preferably three times or more). The LRP students help to write the skits as well as perform them. All community service and adventure activities are conducted as a group and monitored or supervised by an LRP facilitator.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

Cooperative agreements must be set up between the school where the program will be implemented and the substance abuse treatment or health service provider, as well as with humane foundations (i.e., animal shelters), contractors for outdoor activities, volunteer groups or businesses that can provide space for summer activities, and the elementary schools where the students will deliver their puppet projects. Ongoing communication to coordinate these activities also is needed. In terms of logistics and personnel, the school should commit:

- Dedicated space within the school for group activities
- Access to school records
- A guidance counselor or similar staff member to cofacilitate in-school groups
- Transportation for participants to out-of-school activities

In order to staff the program, schools will need to hire:

- **Program Leaders** who work directly with students and are able to effectively manage a caseload of 50 youth. They also will establish and maintain school partnerships, facilitate group meetings, conduct screenings, and provide crisis interventions.
- **A Program Supervisor/Manager** who will handle project management, data collection, and outcomes analysis. This individual must be an experienced, graduate-level clinician, who has clinical supervision skills; proposal writing and fundraising skills; and the ability to build relationships with youth, systems, and bureaucracies.

Program start-up, which includes hiring and training staff—as well as identifying and establishing agreements and partnerships with schools, businesses, and off-site programming—can take up to 4 months. Implementation requires that youth participate in all three program components over the course of 5 months to 1 year for each of the 2 to 4 years they are in the program. (Four years of programming is possible for participants who enter LRP in their freshman year.)

Target Areas

Protective Factors To Increase

Individual

- Empathy
- Optimism
- Social and emotional competence
- Bonding to societal institutions and values
- Positive personal characteristics
- Future orientation

Family

- Identification of values

School

- School bonding and involvement
- High expectations from school personnel

Peer

- Association with healthy, positive peer group
- Peer refusal skills
- Healthy peer boundaries

Risk Factors To Decrease

Individual

- Favorable attitudes toward substance use
- Conduct problems
- Strong, external locus of control
- High sensation-seeking behaviors
- Emergent mental health concerns

School

- Academic failure
- Poor student morale

Peer

- Substance use in peer group
- Association with delinquent peers
- Negative peer pressure

Training

An initial half-hour phone or E-mail consultation is free. Trainers are available to conduct initial training and can provide additional consultation and technical assistance. Fees are based on current county (Fairfax, VA) consulting rates. Curriculum and instruments will be available at the training. In addition, each locality will need to work with LRP staff to coordinate an alternative activity training site and equipment.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

LRP is the result of grassroots advocacy for vital youth substance abuse prevention and youth development services. Local faith and community groups believed collaborative, cost-effective, and innovative programming was the best way to engage youth in positive activities and thus prevent substance use. These groups turned to Fairfax County (VA) Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS) with their ideas. ADS prepared a successful grant proposal that funded the development of LRP.

The Washington-Baltimore HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area) of the Office of National Drug Control Policy funded ADS to run LRP as a 3-year regional demonstration project. The University of Maryland provided research oversight. LRP continues to be funded and operated by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, a Fairfax County, Virginia agency, in cooperation with Fairfax County Public Schools.

EVALUATION DESIGN

Pretest and posttest data was collected during the school year using the Gang Resistance and Education Training instrument developed for LRP. School records were used to track attendance, behavioral reports, and grade point averages. Anecdotal data was collected from youth, school personnel, parents, and press reports. (For details, see *Outcomes* section.)

PROGRAM DEVELOPER

The Leadership and Resiliency Program was developed by Amrit Daryanani with support from Alcohol and Drug Services in collaboration with the Fairfax County Public Schools. Alcohol and Drug Services of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board is an agency of the Fairfax County Government, serving the county of Fairfax (VA), and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church with comprehensive mental health, substance abuse, and mental retardation services.

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RECOGNITION

Model Program—Center for Substance
Abuse Prevention

Best Practices in Science-Based
Programming—Washington Metropolitan
Council of Governments

Achievement Award—National Association
of Counties

Governor's Recognition—Commonwealth
of Virginia

Certificate of Recognition—Fairfax County
Board of Supervisors



*Model Programs are
selected by the Center
for Substance Abuse
Prevention, a division of
SAMHSA.*